472 to be suffering from a mixture of inertia and pure inability
511 to organize the accounts of his business. In some cases he
[65] is compelled to put forward an outline statement for income
[157] tax assessment but generally his illiteracy and suspicion makes him unwilling to trust other individuals with details of his income and expenditure.

511 Within the family, however, this suspicion does not
454 normally exist. In fact the housewife tends to have full
[593] call on the contents of the "one purse" although in only a few cases was it found that she was making any detailed attempt at budgeting for the expenses of her home and family. As with the operation of the farm so with the home, the money is dispensed as demanded but all the time the instinct to save, observed by the 1911 Royal Commissioners (B/186), is there. The traditional peasant idea is
[178] that a large hoard of money or valuables will serve as an insurance when the expected depression arrives. Despite the opinion of the 1911 Commissioners, the notion that the saved capital would be better invested, possibly in capital equipment, is only now spreading to a considerable part of the farming community of the Islands.

511 In the day-to-day expenses of the traditional Maltese
437 village household, barter played a considerable part.
178 Today instances of it are rare and money is the fully accepted medium of exchange. As already indicated the Maltese farmer is not so far removed from his peasant past as may at first sight appear to be the case and one of the basic aims of his farming is still the provision of food
[433] for his family. The average farm in Malta, whatever its basis (stock, dairying or field produce), usually strives
[294] to produce as much of the food needs of the family as possible, though the provision of the family's clothing, as in the past when home-grown cotton was spun and woven to make clothes for the members of the grower's family, is no longer attempted.

262 Thus the food bought in by the farmer's wife includes
438 the 'new' items of diet which cannot be grown on the home farm: preserves, processed cheeses, spaghetti and farinaceous pasta, processed meats, tea, coffee, and evaporated milk (inordinately popular throughout the Islands).
[656] Flour rationing since the early part of the 1939-45 War has killed bread making as a home industry. Meat, except for rabbit, fowl and small birds, has to be purchased, as all
[433] slaughtering is Government-controlled. The farmer does aim to produce the basic vegetables - potatoes, beans, peas, pumpkins, melons, tomatoes, onions, garlic, artichokes, endives, celery, cucumber, carrots, and fruits - oranges, apples, lemons, figs, peaches, etc., required by the family.

178 industry in search of it.

434 (5) The Maltese farmer (and, incidentally, also the
[511] fishermen) has today a standard of living below the average for the whole country (Section 3). In large part this is related to

(a) the economic and technical difficulties facing his agriculture(Section 2),

(b) his inability, in many cases, to make the change from peasant, subsistence to the money-based, commercial farming of today (v.4).

In fact a considerable section of the full-time farming community is now operating either with very little or no profit or is striving to work in a perpetual, though fluctuating, debt (Section 3).

511 Yet this comparatively low living standard vis-à-vis the non-farming section of the population is in fact lower than it appears statistically (Section 3) because

[461] (a) the farmer does not enjoy the limited working day (e.g. eight hours) demanded in most other occupations, and also demanded, significantly, by the full-time farm-labourer without fields of his own (Section 2),

(b) the farmer has even today a more modest level of demands (housing, clothing, food, recreation, etc.) than have the bulk of the rest of the population despite the growth in such demands, discussed in Section 3,

[454] (c) many farmers have been living at a rather higher standard, than that to which they were accustomed, since 1945 on the savings they have retained from their profits accumulated during the siege conditions early in the war. These reserves are now, however, dwindling and disappearing.

829 (6) The farmer is still, in many cases, thinking as a
157 'peasant' subsistence producer although he is at the same
[178] time attempting to operate in a now commercially-orientated agriculture. This emerges in his attitudes to 'officialdom' in the shape of the Department of Agriculture, to co-operatives, to Farmers' Unions, to the agents and middlemen concerned with marketing of produce and the supply of seeds, etc. and to his fellow farmers. He is still very much an individualist in outlook and sceptical of any novel feature not tried and trusted in his experience. He is cautious where outsiders are concerned - notably Government officials, and he is doubtful of the validity, for Malta and Maltese conditions, of the advice of non-Maltese experts on agriculture and related topics. He will, for example, even look for a possible element of treachery in such as the Government's recent plant to improve the packing and grading of produce for export.

On the other hand, however, the farmer is characteristically loud in his assertions that "Government should adopt

829 a policy of long term assurances for agriculture" (B/387,
157 p.39). He claims that the Government "ought" to guarantee his prices, his markets, and "ought" to find the foreign export markets, and provide machinery, subsidies, etc. He also insists, incongruously, that farmers' needs could well be served by a strong and well-organized Union of Farmers and yet, in the next breath, he will reject outright any suggestions that he, individually, might take a prominent part in such a movement. The nature of this attitude emerges clearly from the collection of complaints and comments, made by farmers to Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team (B/387). On the one hand, the farmer demands Government support for farming but, on the other hand, he speaks even of his fellow farmers as "they". Conservative, cautious and usually illiterate, he is quick to speak but slow to act (v.Section 4).

829 The new awareness of horizons outside the village is consequently limited in extent and confined in nature. The farmer's son, however, with his education and emancipation and his ideas of social and economic emulation, has a clearer vision of the illogicality of his father's situation but is not yet sufficiently mentally liberated from the past to see for himself any right course of action.

554 (7) As a class, the farmer is low on the social scale.
369 This arises partly from his illiteracy and the features outlined in (6) and is partly also the outcome of a tradition of wealth and education being confined to the cities and
[177] towns. Wealth and culture came easily to the urban section of Maltese society and both implied foreign contacts on a large scale. Meanwhile the Maltese farmer toiling in his fields remained cut off socially as well as economically.

Today this felt inferiority puts him

178
554 (a) in a weak position for bargaining with Government and 'officials' and business men fully prepared to take advantage of their rather better education,

(b) - if young and literate, in the position of being anxious to escape from his lowly class by leaving the village and farming as opportunity presents itself (v.Section 4).

654 (8) Official policy has been to assist farming in the
178 Islands by means of a variety of subsidies and guarantees designed to protect the farmer from unfavourable competition and fluctuations in market demand (Sections 2 and 4). The industry has, in the past, received such attention only in time of siege of widespread unemployment. The basic intention today is therefore

[135] (a) to enable Malta's only basic industry - agriculture - to develop under protection for it is held that "In an Island where mineral resources are non-existent agriculture must play a predominant part in the national economy" (B/239, p.2).

*159 185 241 178 the source of the enthusiasm among his children and when a few more years have made them money-conscious it is difficult to visualize their reconciling the limitations and lack of profit in farming with their aspirations towards the bright lights of Valletta and other diversions. For the present nevertheless Ġużepp wants to expand his land holding and herd, although he has no sort of a bank balance and thinks in terms of the present low-interest loans being made available by the Government for farm development and of "working harder, rising earlier and economising on fruit and desserts for the children".

*159 367 [427] His house is old and remote from the village. He pays the landlord, "who does not do the repairs he ought", £8.10s per annum and thinks £5 would be much fairer. Given a perpetual lease on a plot he would build himself a new house and include near it accommodation for his animals. For his large family of wife and eight children the house, though very well kept, is hopelessly inadequate. Certainly [157] the placid and generous natures of both Ġużepp and his wife enable the family to carry on under limitations of both home and farm which would have persuaded many another farmer to emigrate long ago.

*159 54 461 Moreover there is nothing in the hamlet which might be called social relaxation. The nearest Band Clubs, cinemas and cafés are in the village more than a mile away - a long distance by Maltese standards. However, as Ġużepp's wife observes "these things are not missed by the people" who have had little experience of them. She notes that in Malta, unlike England, the countryman can easily get to the bright lights, if he wishes, by bus. "But work, family and Church take up a lot of time".

*159 464 654 [426] Labour problems do not trouble Ġużepp. He can himself operate his small holding and care for his two dozen animals with the help of his wife, who joins him in the fields when work is pressing, and his young sons, whose contribution, he admits, is very considerable out of school hours and in the vacations. He is keen to mechanize (i.e. to acquire a hand cultivator on a Government low-interest loan) because he sees this as the way to increase the area worked with his present labour force. A larger area would mean more fodder produced which would bring more profit on the milk sold, while the number of animals could itself be increased along with the provision of extra accommodation (also on Government loan). The basic assumption here is that the Government's guaranteed price to the herdsmen for

*159 443 milk produced will continue. If it does not he would, it appears, be forced to rely more on field produce for sale through the pitkal marketing system. He knows that profits here would be less and disturbingly prone to competitive

CASE III : Nardu (A goats' milk producer)

*159 ●157 Illiterate and suspicious, Nardu typifies the most conservative element in Maltese farming for whom nothing new can be worthy of consideration. It is probable that no amount of lecturing, demonstrations of improved methods, or capital loans from the Government, would persuade him to change the ways he knows. The prospect of machinery does not impress him although he thinks of acquiring a rotary cultivator (at about £245). His observation is, when freely translated, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" (he is aged 40).

*159 23 [425] His father was a [illegible] with a few fields. Nardu's brother took over the family business and sold his share of the fields to Nardu, who also bought out the shares of his five sisters. He has since concentrated all his effort on his herd of goats, regarding his fields primarily as a source of fodder. During the fifteen months of study his herd varied in size from 34 to 50 animals. All the goats are of the local breed as he does "not like horned goats". He is more concerned with producing milk, under the current favourable regime of guaranteed sales to the M.M.U., than with breeding goats. Most of the kids born to his herd are sold for meat or for breeding to a dealer. Payment [426] seems to be made as money becomes available from the M.M.U every two weeks. Often however he admits to being up to two months behind with payment, settling one debt "when the next transaction is afoot".

In 1958, Nardu was talking at length about "getting two or three cows or calves". He "knows about cows from friends" but has not himself got the £300 capital necessary for two. Moreover he observes that "you can't graze cows and their general upkeep is likely to clash with that of goats, especially where one man is working alone as in this case. There seems to be an element of prestige attached to the ownership of cows in a village such as Nardu's where the vast majority of herdsmen have only goats. Certainly his thinking is not guided by comparative costings of milk production from the cow and goat.

*159 434 [443] [511] Nardu's fields produce fodder and some food for the family so that they "will not have to buy in everything from the shops". He reckons to save between 15/- and £1 per week in this way. His wife spends £3 a week on purchased food and she looks back nostalgically to her youth when her mother spent some 30/- per week on food and clothing for a family with twelve children, while she has only three. The steady item of income in Nardu's budget is the money received from the M.M.U. for the goats' milk 000 sold. Shopping is done in the local village but Nardu

*159 24 (ii) Seed - Keeps grain and seed-potatoes back from harvest - usually least saleable.
- Buys sulla seed.

*159 231 (iii) Livestock - Breeds goats from own herd and has no wish to try breeding experiments. Replacement rate c.5 per annum.
- Feeding - no feeding programme and relies mainly on bulk green and dried fodder including rough grazing on wasteland and 6-7 bundles a day of 'haxix' - weedy roadside and wasteland vegetation.

H. General.

*159 ●159 A conservative Maltese goats milk producer. More suspicious than most and not prepared to give much financial information. He has no idea of costs or profit and is only interested in sustained high milk prices.

CASE IV : Wistin (A large-scale goats' milk producer with some land)

*159 234 414 Like Case III, Wistin is a goat herder with fields supplying fodder for the animals together with some food items for the family. His herd is however much larger and in mid-1957, included ninety animals. He began goat herding with a few goats many years ago but the biggest increases have been in the past few years of guaranteed milk sales to the M.M.U. Now he aims primarily at profit from milk and is very much less concerned with rearing kids. He is a member of the Malta Milk Company (Il-Kumpanija Maltija tal-Halib) which, he believes, stands for the 'rights' of the milk-producing herdsmen. The Company demands improvements in the system including a higher price to the producer in the flush production period. It can scarcely be said to argue from strength, in view of the present market situation heavily distorted in favour of the milk-producer by Government policy.

*159 234 461 656 The village became a "Closed Area" in 1955. This meant that Wistin could no longer sell unpasteurized milk from door to door - previously there had been some seven or eight milk-sellers like him in the village. Since 1955 he has been concentrating on his goats and on fodder production. He says he "likes goats". Certainly milking, cleaning and grazing the animals takes the greater part of every day (as in Case II, Wistin takes out his goats to graze and exercise practically every afternoon of the year). He is proud of his herd and "would feel ashamed to appear at the M.M.U. collection depot without a reasonable amount of milk for sale". In the flush summer season this is 20 gallons [433] [434] or more but drops considerably in the winter. Wistin strives to keep the milk production as steady as possibly however throughout the year because a steady supply of milk *159 46 234 465 to the M.M.U. means a steady income for his family. He himself works on his fields only "when some spare time is

*159 241 for January planting at 3-4 cwt. per tomna. Seed from crop used for sowing in following autumn.

(4) - Manure.

- Mixed urban refuse and animal manure plowed in to 12-18 inches.
- One field of 2 tmien received 1 truck load refuse and 30 sacks dry manure.
- One field of 1.5 tmien received 50 sacks of animal manure from G's stock.
- Vines receive c.½ cwt. artificial fertiliser per tomna almost every year.
- Wheat receives from ½ to 1 cwt. artificial fertiliser per tomna per year, broadcast with the seed.

H. General.

*159 [472] [423] [464] [178]
- Partnership has prevented excessive fragmentation of father's land.
- Free exchange of labour allows G to maintain a relatively large holding despite the inability of his young children to assist him. If these children wish to continue in farming, pressure on land will result.
- G therefore encourages his children in their education with a view to emigration and/or employment outside farming.

[435] [451] [461]
- G has no real idea of costing of his production. Can give details of income and expenditure, but makes no allowance for enormous application of labour (see E) necessary for very modest income (see F).

●[157]
- Willing to undertake still more labour (e.g. in spraying fruit trees) to avoid cash expenditure.
- All this despite the fact that G is well above average in intelligence and standard of education.
- Conservative in techniques and attitudes but eager to invest in proven successes (e.g. extension of vines and apple orchards, development of pig-farming). However, markets may already be glutted.
- With clear, patient, reasoned and disinterested advice and encouragement, G could probably much improve his methods and yields to make his holding a more profitable enterprise.

*159 423 CASE XI : Pietru (An arable farmer mainly concerned with irrigated produce.)

The nucleus of Pietru's farm is a block of 14 irrigable tmien on which he spends the greater part of his time. His home is about a mile away in the village and he also holds a large number of patches of dry (baghli) land scattered over the northern part of Malta. The more outlying of these dry fields have tended to be neglected, or left to Pietru's wife and family to work, while he has concentrated on building up and developing his irrigable holding. His father bought four of these irrigable tmien after the 1914-18 War although at that time the area was covered with concrete. This was laboriously removed and irrigation channels ('canali') installed. Other adjacent patches were acquired as they became available - Pietru himself acquiring the latest addition in 1954. He had taken over from his father some years previously although he had started his working life as a mason.

*159 241 464 Today Pietru, his son, wife and daughters cultivate the 14 tmien very intensively. The suggestion of a pathway is rejected because "it would take up too much irrigable land".

*159 433 451 land but maintains that it is becoming uneconomic because of high labour costs and difficulty of raising yields any further.

(iii) Makes careful practical distinctions between types of land:

*159 134 241
- some fields have 8 inches of soil on rock platform and these can only be worked by hand.
- deeper soils up to 3 feet thick need periodic deep plowing although this may result in the bringing to the surface of "newba" (or "melħ" - salt) - sub-surface saline concentration with harmful results.
- red and white soils have different characteristics for tillage and crop-growth.
- notes the presence of a thin, very hard weathered layer on top of Globigerina bed rock. This "skorċa tal-blat" is believed to prevent the movement of moisture from the rock water-table to overlying soil.

*159 ●159 626 (iv) In spite of literacy, general initiative and acumen he is conservative about trying new ideas. Here, as elsewhere, the chief obstacle appears to be social rather than economic - the fear of being different and the fear of failure in the eyes of the rest of the community.

*159 829 (v) In spite of (possibly because of) experience in check-weighing, is no more prepared to trust M.M.U. and official marketing agencies than any other farmer.

CASE XIII : Toni (A part-time arable farmer and caretaker of a military camp.)

*159 241 434 An example of part-time farming in which the field operations are the subsidiary part of the business - from the financial point of view though not as regards the amount of time spent on them.

His caretaking duties bring him some £5 per week for most of the year and yet leave him with enough free time to cultivate several irrigable patches near the camp. Now aged nearly seventy he works a much smaller total area than the thirty tmien of his younger days. He could in fact live on his income from his caretaking and continues to work the fields for four reasons:

(a) To provide food for his present family of three,
(b) To produce a supplementary income from the sale of cash crops,
(c) To occupy his time with the farming which he knows - as something of a hobby,
(d) To provide his emigrated sons each "with a piece of land" when they return to Malta for their retirement.

241 198 46 *[159] Items (b) and (c) reflect his independence of farming for the maintenance of himself and his wife and daughter, while (c) and (d) suggest that although farming ceases to be the countryman's livlihood he inclines to retain a residual interest in it even when he has been away from Malta for the greater part of his working life. This is a characteristic [369] feature of rural Malta and an important aspect of the recent increase in part-time farming. The 1957 Census of Agri- [162] culture lists 9,588 part-time as against 7,813 full-time farmers (B/164, p.20). The trend towards part- in place of full-time farming is significant in the present overall retreat from agriculture. It represents in many cases a

*159 [464] to find farm labourers even at 25 to 30/- a day.
- Occasional hired help at harvest time.

F. Production and Sales.

[434] - Main profit from tomatoes, grapes and potatoes.
[433] Subsidiary income from vegetables.
[251] - Attempts to space out production and sales by using many different varieties and storing, e.g. potatoes until prices are high.

G. Husbandry.

*159 241 43 (i) - Potatoes: three crops annually on best land.
- Artichokes: replanted every 4 years.
- Tomatoes: seed beds attached to irrigated plots carry many varieties.
- Melons: has experimented successfully with seed sent by relative in Canada.
- Cauliflowers: 4 crops between August and March, earliest sold before heads are formed.

(ii) - Manure brought from Luqa; 4 truckloads - £22 plus £8 for carriage will last one year.
Also uses town refuse.
- Copper sulphate spray for potatoes, paraffin spray as weed killer.

(iii) - Has recently added to holding by reclamation of wasteland. Constructed a 2-tmion field, soil for which cost £150 (20 truckloads) and transport £50. This field returned £60 worth of potatoes in first year, £35 of tomatoes in the second. In autumn 1957 was preparing to repeat the process.

(iv) - Irrigated land rested under sulla every fourth year.

H. General.

*159 242 [463] [465] An unusually proficient part-timer cushioned by income from position as camp caretaker (£5.12.0 per week when camp not fully occupied). His job appears to leave him plenty of time to devote to his holding. He is willing to experiment and take risks, though experiments are concealed from his neighbours until proved successful. Has a lively appreciation of how to obtain best returns from his produce; very much au fait with market conditions.

*159 434 [451] Keeps fairly careful accounts and, according to his own statements, makes a profit of £250 p.a. from farming:

Receipts from produce	£450
Labour costs	£ 50
Seeds, manure, transport	£150
Profit	£250

Value of produce consumed by family £30.

His two jobs have made him appreciably more prosperous than his neighbours. Without the subsidiary income from caretaking his financial position would be extremely precarious. As it is he is able to amass a considerable [454] capital reserve.

*159 157 829 PART 2. Heavy Tractors and Maltese Farming.

CASE XIV : Ġanni (A young, progressive contract-plowman, with heavy tractors and other mechanized equipment.)

Ġanni is a bachelor in his late twenties. In most respects he is quite atypical of Maltese farmers today but his work and attitudes illustrate most vividly the economic, technical and social problems facing agriculture and the rural community in Malta.

His youth, his knowledge of written and spoken English, his first hand acquaintance with Australia, the United Kingdom, Italy and other countries, his belief in mechanization as the way to make money in Maltese farming, his social

*159 ● 157 829

rejection of his village background, and his attitude to agricultural and other authorities in the Islands all mark him out as apart from the 'traditional' kind of farmer. At the same time, however, his case reflects the frustration and impatience of his own generation in the agricultural community.

*159 423 167 177 241 [441]

He comes of a village family in which his father and paternal grand-father were both butchers. His father acquired a small farm of some two acres to provide vegetables for the family but neither Ġanni nor his brother, a few years his junior, was keen to expand the family holding. The family butchering business held no more attraction for them and was relinquished by the father when he retired from full-time work some years ago to run a small bar in the village. Both the brothers thought that neither butchering nor farming presented scope for money making so they emigrated to Australia. Ġanni's seven years there left him unsympathetic towards farming as practised in Malta, with its fragmentation, hand-labour and other limitations. He saw mechanization on the Australian pattern, with tractor-drawn, three-furrow plows, combine-harvesters and a variety of other large implements, as the only way to make Maltese farming a profitable venture.

*159 177 241 409

He returned home full of ideas of making money as a contractor-plowman. His native knowledge of Maltese farmers and farming left him with no illusions as to possibilities. Ġanni's subsequent efforts to find takers for his deep-plowing have entailed a hard fight against prejudice and criticism. Clearly many of the objections raised as to his methods and machines being unsuitable for Maltese conditions have not been without foundation but he has pushed ahead, working over a larger area, buying new types of machinery, etc.

The present discussion is concerned less with the technical details of this kind of heavy mechanization in Malta than with the attitudes which it reveals - especially the tremendous gulf in outlook between the older farmers and the few young men like Ġanni who are still making some effort in Maltese farming. It is held that these latter are more important than their present numbers would suggest since, without their sustained effort, an economic and social continuity will be lost. They are individuals upon whom some new or improved farming could be built in Malta and Gozo.

*159 241 829

Ġanni's view of farming in Malta.

"Farming in Malta is today generally uneconomical because of the high costs of the necessary hand-labour and because of the difficulties facing the mechanization of field-work" (Ġanni). He attributes what he regards as the present dismal prospect of Maltese agriculture to the lack of a guaranteed exportable crop, on the one hand, and to the lack of direction to the farmer from the agricultural authorities, on the other. Nevertheless he believes that neither